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MONTANA

WILDLIFE BULLETIN

Published by the Montana Fish and Game Commission

Volume Two | February, 1945 | Number One

Ice Fishing on the Missouri River

Ice Fishing

There are many sportsmen in Montana who will endure cold feet and numb fingers and still enjoy winter ice fishing. The Commission has opened certain waters in almost every locality so that many individuals may avail themselves of the opportunity of enjoying this sport. A detailed report of all of the waters which are open to ice fishing may be found in the Fish and Big Game Regulations for 1944 where dates and open waters are clearly defined.

For those who plan to try ice fishing for the first time, one of the first requirements is an abundance of warm clothing. The second requirement is the essentials for making a good camp fire and the third and fourth requirements are plenty of lunch and last, but not least, your fishing tackle. Many veteran ice fishermen contend that although an ample lunch and a thermos bottle of hot coffee are considered fundamentally sufficient, the addition of other stimulants slightly stronger than coffee contribute materially to a successful day's fishing.

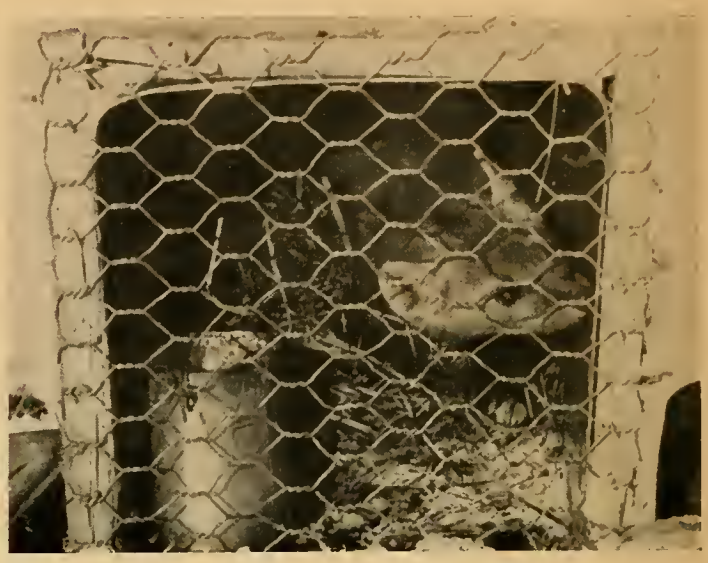
One of the redeeming phases of winter fishing is the simplicity of the tackle required, usually nothing more than a reasonable length of line with a sinker and snell hook on one end and a short length of pole or rod attached to the other. The variety of baits used are many and range from the lowly grub worm to good red steak which has probably been pilferred from the family refrigerator in the cook's absence.

Many pages could be written on the species which are most apt to be caught during the winter months. However, on checking many fishermen's creels, it has been found that practically all of the species with the exception of the Bass and one or two other members of the Bass family can be caught almost as readily through the ice as in open water during the summer months.

(Please Turn to Page 5)

Transplanting Pine Marten

Pine Marten in crates ready to be transported to the liberation area



Individual crates are provided for each marten

In an effort to further develop the fur resources of the state, the Fish and Game Department has completed the trapping and transplanting of 12 pine marten. As far as is known, it is the first time that this fur-bearer has been live trapped for transplanting purposes anywhere in the United States.

The marten, or American sable as it is often called, is classed among the most valuable of our fur bearers. Due to this fact, they have been relentlessly trapped since the time of the early explorers. They have as a result been completely annihilated throughout much of their original range. Desirable numbers are now found only within the most remote mountainous regions of the state. It is thought that by live trapping a limited number from several adequately populated regions, seed stock may be obtained for the restocking of desirable areas.

The trapping work was conducted in October. The animals were captured in the Whitefish Range near the Canadian boundary. This work is closely tied in with the fur resources investigation and patrol work that has been carried out up there during the past three winters. The animals were taken from a relatively small natural unit. The effect of taking 12 marten from the approximately known population of this area will be checked during the present winter. The information obtained will be applied to the region as a whole as an aid in determining how many marten may be taken out by trappers without seriously depleting the breeding stock.

The 12 marten were transported by pickup to the Fleecer Mountain area south and west of Butte. Here they were liberated in an area that past records indicate supported a desirable number. They were, however, entirely removed many years ago as a result of heavy trapping in that area. The region is somewhat isolated from ranges in which the marten still exist; it is thought, therefore, that many years would be required for a desirable population to be built up through natural drift from other areas.

Marten were found to handle rather well in captivity. As caught, they were taken to a central holding pen where they were kept until transported. When being moved they were placed in individual crates made from five-gallon kerosene cans. Wooden crates were found to be unsatisfactory as the marten could readily gnaw out of them.

After being released this Pine Marten scampered up the nearest tree

Winter Food Refuges

It has been found in working with the game birds of the state that deep snows constitute one of the most serious limiting factors to their development. This has been particularly noticed throughout portions of the Chinese Pheasant range, and is quite pronounced within several of the intermountain valleys in central and western Montana, these being the Helena, Gallatin, Madison and Jefferson valleys. Within these areas cover is quite abundant and food is sufficiently adequate, except for short periods during severe winters. At such times deep and often crusted snow renders much of the food unavailable. This condition may last for only ten days to two weeks, but it has been demonstrated in the past that this is sufficient time for substantial damage to have been done to local pheasant populations.

Supplemental feeding has been found of real value in tiding pheasants over these critical periods. Wildlife clubs have rendered a real service in carrying on this type of work. In many cases, however, they have been handicapped by not having sufficient sheltered locations in which to feed the birds and provide necessary grit.

The Department is experimenting with the possibility of developing an adequate economical type of shelter that might be constructed in strategic locations on the birds' winter range, these to act as key locations upon which to develop a winter feeding program. The Helena Valley was chosen as the first site upon which to carry out this work. It is very typical of desirable Chinese Pheasant habitat that is seriously handicapped in reaching its maximum development of birds by occasional periods of deep snow. It is also particularly convenient in regard to checking purposes; the information obtained from closely observing results on the Helena Valley may be applied to siimlar developments in other parts of the state.

During the early winter 12 small areas were selected in the valley. These were carefully spaced so that they would adequately cover the critical winter range. These areas of approximately an acre each have been leased by the Department for a period of five years.

The development of these small food refuges has been worked out on a cooperative basis between the Helena Wildlife Association, the Fish and Game Department and land owners. The Department will build the 12 shelters, fence the areas, and plant desirable food-bearing shrubs within them. The Club will build the food hoppers, keep them replenished as needed, and plant corn or wheat to be left standing within the refuge area. This winter feeding program will tie in nicely with the magpie control work that is being carried out by the local club throughout the pheasant range in the valley.

The type of construction used on the shelters is quite simple. The material used consists of poles, willows, straw, nails and baling wire. Posts are set in the ground for uprights and poles are nailed or wired to the uprights for rafters and cross-pieces. A layer of willows is then placed on the rafters and cross-pieces, over which is placed a layer of straw and another layer of willows. The straw is used to bind the willows and make a thatched roof. The posts used as uprights are also covered with willows, bound with wire, to give as natural appearance with the surroundings as possible.

TO SPORTSMEN . . .

All Sportsmen's organizations and other interested individuals are requested to submit their recommmendations to the Fish and Game Commission for any changes to be made in the Fishing and Big Game Regulations for 1945-46. Your recommendations should be received not later than March 1, 1945. Copies should be mailed to the Fish and Game Department, Helena, Montana, and a copy to the Commissioner in your district.

Shelter blends in well with surroundings

Front view of shelter

Conservation of Wildlife in Montana

Conservation is a term used to indicate the adhering to the existing order of things. Conservation of our wildlife can be practiced only by following a plan of harvesting the surplus of any species of game animal, game bird or fish and preserving a suitable habitat for each specie to insure continued reproduction. Game laws enacted by our Legislature and rules and regulations of the Fish and Game Commission are made solely for this purpose. Should there be any question of the wisdom and necessity of these laws, we should bear in mind that our wildlife has no better means of defense today, from predation by man than it had centuries ago, while man has increased his efficiency to kill a thousandfold.

The first conservation law pretaining to wildlife in Montana was passed by the first session of the Territorial Legislature in 1864-65. The bill stated "that fishing tackle consisting of a pole, line and hook shall be the only lawful way that speckled mountain trout may be caught in any of the streams of the Territory," and the using of seins or nets was also prohibited. From this early beginning our Fish and Game laws have developed to an ever widening scope. The following highlights of the progress made throughout the years are given in chronological order:

Laws of Montana Territorial Legislative Assembly

1864-65 First law enacted to conserve fish:
Trout to be caught only with hook, line and pole and use of seins or nets prohibited.

1869 First laws enacted protecting game birds:
Quail and partridge protected—closed for a period of three years.

1872 First laws enacted protecting game animals:
Closed season from February 1, to August 15, each year on Buffalo, Moose, Elk, Deer, Mountain Sheep, Mountain Goats, Antelope and Hares.

1873 Killing of Song Birds prohibited.

1876 First closed season on fur bearing animals:
Closed season on Beaver, Otter, Marten, and Fishers from April 1, to October 1, each year.
First closed season on duck and geese:
Closed season from May 15, to August 10, each year.
First laws enacted to curtail marketing of illegal game:
Common carriers prohibited from transporting out of the state illegally killed game.
First law enacted prohibiting use of explosives to kill fish.

1877 Act passed making it unlawful to kill game animals for hides alone without using or selling the meat.
Trapping of Beaver prohibited except on private lands.
Unlawful to hunt or chase game animals with dogs.
Sale of game birds for market purposes prohibited.

1879 First appropriation from Territorial Treasury for benefit of fishing:
$1,000.00 appropriated July 21, 1879 for removal of part of the Great Falls on the Clark's Fork of Columbia River to enable salmon to reach upper waters of the territory.

1881 First stream pollution law enacted:
Dumping of sawdust and debris from sawmills into streams prohibited.

1883 Act passed prohibiting the destroying of nests of game birds and waterfowl or to take away eggs from nests.

Laws of the State of Montana

1889 First Game Wardens provided:
County Commissioners empowered to hire one warden for each county if needed.

1891 Sale of trout caught in public waters prohibited.

1893 First year around closed season on Moose and Elk.

1895 Bag limits placed on game animals and Prairie Chickens for the first time:
Each person prohibited from taking more than 2 Moose, 2 Elk, 8 Deer, 8 Antelope, 8 Mountain Sheep, 8 Mountain Goats and 100 Prairie Chickens in any one year.
First Board of Fish and Game Commissioners appointed by the Governor composed of three members.

1897 First daily bag limit placed on game birds:
No person may kill more than 20 Grouse or Prairie Chickens in one day.
Sale of game animals, game birds, trout and grayling prohibited.

1901 First license required for taking game animals and game birds:
Non-residents who are non-taxpayers required to purchase hunting license.
Game animals $25.00
Game Birds $15.00
No license required of non-residents to catch fish.

1903 Shipping permits to ship game out of the state required, packages containing fish or game to be labeled.

Guides license required.
Taxidermists license required.

1905 First resident license required for taking fish or game:
Resident license fee $1.00—one license only per family required.

1907 First Fish Hatchery at Anaconda provided for by appropriation from the Legislature:
Non-resident fishing license required, fee $1.00.

1909 First daily bag limit placed on wild ducks:
Unlawful for any person to kill more than 20 ducks in one day.

1911 First game preserves established by the Legislature.

1913 Montana Fish and Game Commission organized Superintendent of Fisheries appointed.

1915 First daily bag limit placed on game fish:
Daily limit 25 pounds per day, unlawful to catch more than 10 fish under six inches in one day.

1917 Resident hunting and fishing license fee raised from $1.00 to $1.50.

1919 Restriction on use of the automobile to kill game:
Unlawful to kill or capture game from an automobile.
First license required for taking fur bearing animals:
Marten license fee, $1.00.

1921 Fish and Game Commission granted power to allot fish and game districts in the state and to close or open seasons on game animals, birds, fish and fur bearers under certain conditions:
Resident hunting and fishing license fee raised from $1.50 to $2.00.

1931 Big game license required to take Elk and Deer. Fee, $1.00.
Fur Dealers license required to deal in furs in the State: Fee, $1.00.

1941 Fish and Game Commission given regulatory powers over open and closed seasons—creation of game preserves and setting bag limits.
Legislation enacted enabling the Fish and Game Commission to create Wildlife Restoration Projects with funds appropriated by the Federal Governments to aid in Wildlife Restoration.

The title to all wild game, fish and fur bearers, from Colonial times has been held to belong to the State in trust for all the people.

The task of protecting this priceless heritage in a never ending job for the Conservationist. He must ever be ready to enact legislation restricting the use of new inventions, methods and devices for the taking of fish and game, which, if used without control, would threaten the extinction of any species of our wildlife.

ICE FISHING . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

In some regions of the State, particularly on Flathead Lake, the ice fishermen have developed their sport to a high degree. Most of the fishermen in this region construct a small, very light, frame shack, known as a fish house. Usually such a structure is not over four or six feet square and about the same height and mounted on a pair of steel runners for ease in moving it about over the ice. Practically all of these fish shacks are equipped with a floor which has either one or two holes cut in the bottom and which is slid over a corresponding hole cut in the ice. In most of these houses a small wood heater has been installed and the driftwood to be found along the shore of the lake furnishes the fuel. Such individuals, when so equipped, are able to spend the entire day in comparative comfort, regardless of sub-zero temperatures which may be outside.

However, all of this is not necessary by any means for a good successful ice fishing trip. The main requisites being moderate weather, a good location where you are reasonably sure of catching some fish and a congenial group of fellows whose banter remarks back and forth over the ice during the course of the day contribute much to the good fellowship and success of a winter day in the wide open spaces.

Grizzly bears vary in color from pale brown to nearly black. Light tips on the hairs produce the characteristic grizzled or silver-tipped appearance upon which the common names are based.

When the cork bobs up and down you have a bite

Elk in the Wintertime

The habits of the elk during the winter months are not as well known as those of the fall, but are equally fascinating. By November on a typical elk range the mating activities have for the most part terminated. The bugling of the bulls no longer rings through the crisp air of the twilight and morning hours. A hush has fallen on the mountains. There is a feeling of expectancy; it is as if the wild things were waiting uneasily for the coming winter. The snow line moves steadily down from the higher peaks; a blanket of white has reached the mountain meadows where the elk have fed leisurely during the summer and fall.

A definite change may now be observed in the movements of the elk. The winter hersd are forming. Elk are moving continually down out of the higher country where the snow is becoming deep. In December it is not unusual to see herds of elk on favored ranges numbering well into the hundreds. The composition of these large winter groups is typical. It is seldom, after they have become established and are undisturbed, that you would see mature bulls among them. These big fellows seem to prefer wintering a bit apart from the main groups. Spike bulls are, nearly always, found among the cows and calves. It has been noticed, however, that when the elk are disturbed the mature bulls will often run in with the main herd, apparently for guidance. It seems that the majestic appearance of the bull is only skin deep, at least in regard to leadership. Invariably a mixed group of elk is led by a sagacious old cow.

The securing of food during these critical months of deep and often crusted snow far outshadows all other activities. The elk on his historic range was primarily a grass eating animal. Early explorers found vast herds of elk along the river bottoms and rolling prairies, often long distances from the mountains. The necessary activities of man have now pushed the elk, as well as many other species of game, back into the relative security of the mountain ranges. Here the elk have adjusted themselves to a changed environment. They must often paw through from 15 to 30 inches of snow for grass. Upon many ranges, such as those found in the vast wilderness tracts of the South Fork of the Flathead River, little grass is found. Here elk subsist primarily upon browse plants, these being willow, mountain maple, dogwood, and even, during periods of extreme snow depths, the needles and twigs of lodgepole pine and Douglas fir.

The return to the higher ranges following improved weather conditions is a more leisurely affair. The herd is often broken into small groups that feed as they drift along.

Thus the long winter has worn away. The melting snows of late March and early April are soon followed by the first green grass appearing upon exposed sunny south slopes. These green shoots are eagerly sought. More and more forage appears. The elk may now forget the rigors and perils of the winter and turn to the next great event in the ever shifting drama of the wild things—the appearance of the calves.

An elk using a stream bed as a trail to keep out of deep snow

WITH THE WARDENS . . .

Charles R. Price, Deputy Game Warden stationed at Dillon, Montana, was born on a small farm near Cleveland, Ohio, July 27, 1880. From boyhood his interest centered around hunting, fishing and trapping. He and his brothers hunted coon, oppossum, quail, cottontail rabbits and squirrels. They trapped mink, muskrat and an occasional skunk. During the summer the boys enjoyed fishing in the warm shallow waters of the river close by, catching sunfish and bass.

CHARLES R. PRICE

When he was 17, Charles Price moved West to Market Lake, Idaho, now known as Roberts, where he worked on the Blue Stem Ranch, operated by the Bell family who had been former neighbors in Ohio.

In 1908 Mr. Price was married, spent one year in Ohio and returned to Roberts. In 1910 he moved to Dillon and operating a shooting gallery for two years. Then he worked at the Montana Auto Supply Company until July, 1925, when he was appointed Deputy Game Warden by Robert H. Hill, State Game Warden at that time.

That his work appeals to him is evident, when he states: "My work in this capacity has given me many challenges but has been rich in experiences, both thrilling and otherwise, and I cherish the memory of them all."

Mr. Price pioneered in pheasant liberation in his district and has given valuable service in the rearing and planting of fish in Beaverhead County.

"During Kenneth McDonald's administration as State Game Warden, in 1935," reports Mr. Price. "I recommended the use of the C. L. Hancock Live Beaver Traps, which the State acecpted and purchased." Since that time he has live trapped a good number of beaver which were damaging irrigation ditches, flooding meadows, etc., and transplanted them to districts where their work was beneficial rather than harmful.

In closing, Charles Price says: "I have been glad to serve the State in the capacity of Deputy Game Warden and have enjoyed my work very much and the pleasant associations with real sportsmen, the ranchers and stockmen of our country. The Game poachers and law violators grow fewer each year. I think the Sportsmen's Clubs are a great help to us and one should be organized in each community."

State Produces Own Early Spawn

For the proper management of our Fisheries it has always been necessary to acquire several million Rainbow eggs during the winter months. These eggs when placed in our hatcheries are hatched out and ready to be transferred to the outside ponds by the time our later eggs arrive. In years past such eggs were shipped in from Massachusetts, Utah and other remote points. This has not only proved to be quite costly but the possibility of obtaining these egsg was very uncertain.

Last year experiments were carried odt at West Yellowstone in an effort to obtain Early Rainbow eggs for our own State Hatcheries and this year full scale operations are being conducted. A limited number of adult Rainbow have been trapped at the West Yellowstone racks and transferred to the South Fork traps, the waters of which remain quite free of slush ice during the long winter months. It is in these traps that the Rainbow are held and fed until the proper time for the taking of eggs. From all indications our first Rainbow eggs will be taken not later than the middle of February this year and present indications point to a take of at least three million eggs which will be sufficient for all Early Rainbow requirements at the 12 State Hatcheries and the Bozeman and Ennis Stations which operate in cooperation with our present planting program.

IN MEMORIAM . . .

On January 6, J. F. Hendricks, who constructed and operated Montana's first game farm, passed away.

Mr. Hendricks was born at Beveren-Wass, Belgium, on May 3, 1884. He began work for the Fish and Game Department on July 17, 1929 and was Superintendent of the Warm Springs Game Farm until the fall of 1941. Mr. Hendricks remained at the Warm Springs Game Farm as Caretaker until his death after a lingering illness.

We of the Fish and Game Department, along with all sportsmen throughout the State are deeply indebted to Mr. Hendricks for his pioneering the work of raising game birds in Montana.

A motor snow-toboggan used to patrol in deep snow

Strange Companions . . .

Cleo Arps of Augusta, who has worked for the Forest Service in the Sun River country for many years, has reported a rather interesting incident. One day while leading his pack string around a turn on the Sun River Trail, he encountered a coyote and badget traveling side by side toward him.

On another occasion, he observed a coyote standing over a badger hole in an open park. The coyote was looking intently down this burrow and from time to time would cock his head as if listening. Presently a large badger emerged from the hole and he and the coyote moved off together.

We have received several other reports of similar occurrences and feel that perhaps at times a badger and coyote will travel about together. The coyote apparently realizes that quite often, while his companion is busy digging in an attempt to unearth a ground squirrel, the squirrel will try to escape by some other entrance and could be thus quite easily picked up. Apparently most of the advantage in this partnership wuold be on the side of the coyote.

ATTENTION SPORTSMEN!

This issue of the Montana Wildlife Bulletin is the 6th to be published and distributed by the Department. Below you will find a coupon provided for your convenience in order that you may subscribe to the Bulletin. There will be six copies during the year.

In the Bulletin, we are attempting to supply you with current conservation matters and also to keep you posted with the conservation projects which have been completed or are in progress. We will welcome suggestions as to specific wildlife topics you would particularly like.

All of the money derived from subscription funds will be used for the publication

If you are interested in becoming a subscriber to the Montana Wildlife Bulletin, please send your subscription in at once.

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STATE OF MONTANA
Fish & Game Commission
Helena, Montana

Please enter my subscription to the Montana Wildlife Bulletin for one year. Enclosed please find $1.00.

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Bear in the Badlands . . .

On December 11th of this year a Scoutmaster and troop from Glendive were hiking in the Badlands about three miles southeast of town. Much to their surprise they ran onto bear tracks. These were the first seen in that part of the country for many years.

Indications which were checked by the Game Warden pointed toward the possibility of three bear in the area. This is the region where 125 deer, trapped in the western part of the state by the Fish and Game Department, have been liberated. Glendive sportsmen are now looking forward to future deer hunting with the added possibility of getting a shot at a bear.

An additional note has come in from Ken Thompson of the Department. It seems that while digging up the history of bear in the eastern part of the state he ran into fragmentary accounts of a little golden-colored fellow that was spoken of by the old timers as the Sun Bear. According to the reports, this bear was found only in the breaks and badlands. His size seldom exceeded that of a two-year-old black bear. Along with the Audobon, or Badlands, mountain sheep, this little bear has become extinct. The last year it was seen was about 1890.

FORMER EMPLOYEES NOW IN THE ARMED FORCES

J. P. Campbell	Robert Casebeer
R. H. Lambeth	Wm. E. Schultz
Lester Newman	Julius K. Stinson
Jack Thompson	Burke Thompson
Waldo Vangsness	Forest Keller
Don Brown	Ed Furnish
Donald Wright	Bill Thompson
Ben Wahle	Ken Thompson
Leo LaTray	Gene Sherman
Emmett Colley	Raleigh Shields
Bob Brink	Ross Snyder
V. W. Bailey	Vern Campbell
	Harold Fletcher

MONTANA WILDLIFE BULLETIN

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